

## EDITORIALS.

THE BOTANICAL EDITOR of the *American Naturalist* has done well in calling botanists to account for their persistent use of the old units of measurement. We take it for granted that argument is no longer necessary to establish the claim of the metric system. As Dr. Bessey says, the scientific bodies of the country have urged upon Congress the advisability of legislating upon the subject, and are loud in their denunciation of the crudities of the old system. Among these protesting scientific men botanists are prominently represented, and it seems somewhat inconsistent for them to continue to use such measurements as lines, inches, etc. Usage is more powerful than legislation in such a matter, and the change will be effected for botanists when their standard texts and leading journals rigidly adopt it, at least in all technical descriptions. In the *Synoptical Flora*, begun so long ago, uniformity seems to demand a continuation of the old units in all subsequent parts. In so new a publication as the *Illustrated Flora* it is a pity that the metric system was not introduced. In the forthcoming *Flora of North America* it certainly should be adopted. The journals, however, can change at any time. It has been the policy of the BOTANICAL GAZETTE to use the metric system in all technical descriptions, unless for some reason the author prefers the old units. We would now suggest that all American journals and serial publications unite in making the change, not in loose fashion, but as an avowed policy.

IT IS somewhat remarkable that the tropical laboratory proposition should have met with so immediate and so wide a response. Mr. MacDougal's announcement of the commission within two months of the first suggestion is noteworthy, but less so than the composition of the commission. It might have been expected that this duty would find only some of our younger botanists ready, but with Dr. Farlow and Dr. Campbell as the additional American members,



the commission becomes most adequately representative of American botanists. The institutional and botanical distribution of the commissioners is most happy. Their judgment will be competent to include every facility sought for in tropical surroundings, and their report will be regarded as final both as to the location and the advantages of a tropical laboratory. The assured cooperation of British botanists through a commissioner, and through liberal offers of facilities in case the station is established in British possessions, insures for the laboratory an international character.